

CONTEXT

- Zimbabwe is susceptible to disasters including localized droughts, floods, and locust infestations that limit harvests and the availability of grazing land, reducing household income among the country's many rural smallholder farmers. In addition, poor macroeconomic conditions exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and related movement restrictions have resulted in sharp price increases of basic commodities and reduced access to food and livelihoods, particularly among urban households, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET).
- During the peak of Zimbabwe's 2021 agricultural lean season from January to March, when food is scarcest, nearly 3.4 million people in rural areas, or 35 percent of the country's rural population, were in need of emergency food assistance, according to an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis. Limited access to food in rural and urban areas of Zimbabwe has also resulted in wasting—the deadliest form of malnutrition—among children younger than five years of age and pregnant and lactating women in affected areas, the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee reports.
- The compounded effects of shocks, such as drought or rapid price changes, make meeting basic needs a chronic challenge for many vulnerable Zimbabweans. Despite increased income and improved food security in the the April-to-July harvest season, FEWS NET anticipates that many poor households will likely face increased needs again by late 2021, with new shocks like COVID-19 restrictions reducing capacity to prepare for future challenges.



ASSISTANCE

- To meet the acute food needs of the most food-insecure households in Zimbabwe, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) has consistently supported the provision of emergency food and nutrition assistance to vulnerable households through the UN World Food Program (WFP). This includes support for the monthly distribution of food commodities—including cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil—as well as complementary nutritional support to food-insecure households during the lean season. During the 2020 lean season, WFP reached over 1 million people across Zimbabwe with emergency food and nutrition assistance. WFP also recently provided unconditional cash transfers to support increased needs among urban populations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching nearly 100,000 people by February 2021.
- USAID/BHA is also responding to emergency needs generated by recent disasters, including a 2018–2020 drought and Cyclone Idai in March 2019. For example, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) continues to improve resilience to natural disasters by constructing and rehabilitating houses for cyclone- and drought-affected

households in eastern Zimbabwe’s Manicaland Province. In response to protracted needs during Zimbabwe’s recovery from Tropical Cyclone Idai in 2019, IOM is working in Manicaland’s Chimanimani and Chipinge districts to build transitional shelters for families whose houses were destroyed by the cyclone and to strengthen community resilience to future climatic shocks.

- USAID/BHA-supported emergency programs also support livelihoods recovery among smallholder farmers and other vulnerable populations. For example, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is providing agriculture assistance and livestock support in central Zimbabwe’s Midlands Province. ADRA also promotes the use of village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), which boost access to financial services, while other USAID/BHA partners continue to respond to emergency needs among vulnerable rural populations.
- In addition to addressing emergency humanitarian needs in Zimbabwe, USAID/BHA continues to support early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) programming to help local communities meet long-term food and nutrition needs. In Fiscal Years (FYs) 2013–2020, USAID/BHA supported Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA) and World Vision through the former Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) to implement two separate programs designed to bolster food security and nutrition outcomes among rural, chronically food-insecure households. Combined, the two programs demonstrably improved household access to food and livelihood opportunities while streamlining agricultural practices through irrigation and pest management. Through World Vision’s ENSURE program, the number of farmers with access to financial services nearly doubled from 2013 to 2020, while CNFA’s Amalima program helped more than 75,000 farmers increase yields through the adoption of better agricultural practices and improved water access for nearly 19,000 households.
- In FY 2020, USAID/BHA supported CARE and CNFA to support the launch of two programs in Manicaland, Masvingo, and Matabeleland North provinces. Through these new five-year activities totaling \$130 million, CARE and CNFA aim to increase household income by enhancing access to VSLAs; promote climate-smart agricultural practices; improve nutrition through improved water, sanitation and hygiene practices; and increase disaster preparedness and resilience. CNFA is also promoting a unique watershed management system in Matabeleland North to help communities improve natural resource utilization and governance. Additionally, USAID/BHA plans to coordinate with USAID Zimbabwe’s Office of Economic Growth and Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Office to improve resilience outcomes in southeastern Zimbabwe.



USAID/BHA programming promotes the livelihoods of people in Zimbabwe affected by climatic shocks, economic adversity, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Above, a Zimbabwean farmer living with a disability receives agricultural assistance for livestock production.
Photo Credit: Kudzai Tinago/ ADRA

USAID/BHA Funding in Zimbabwe ¹			
	Emergency ²	ER4	TOTAL
FY 2020	\$78,367,484	\$17,948,663	\$96,316,147
FY 2021	\$34,757,104	\$19,387,101	\$54,144,205

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of June 17, 2021. Totals include estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.

² Includes funding for programs that integrate ER4 activities with emergency response.